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the architecture & interior design international magazine | middle east

CONNECTIONS JOINING LANDS AND PEOPLE

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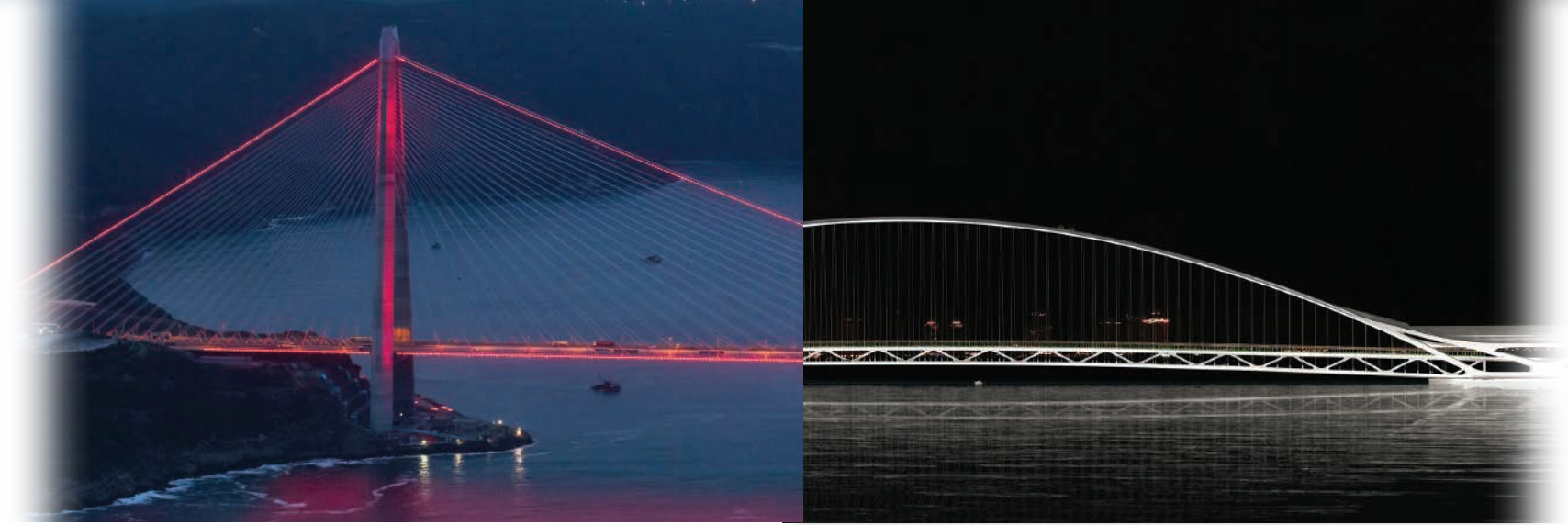
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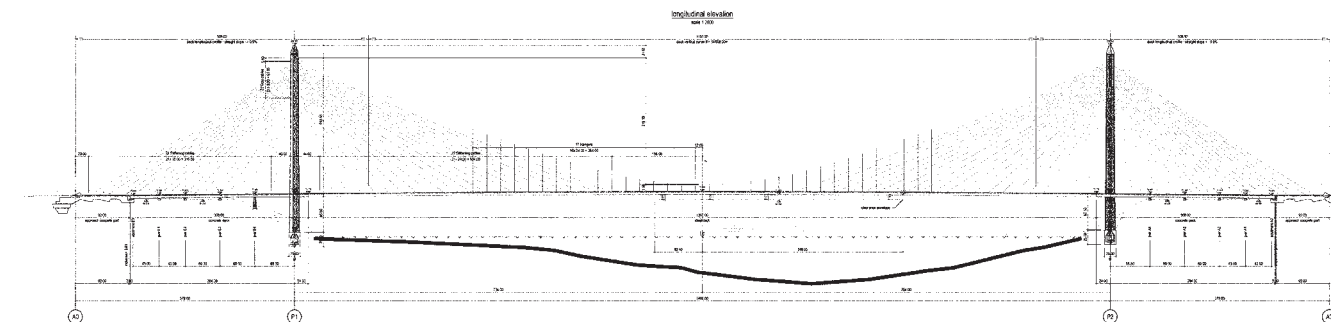
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Inside out, outside in: the Three Gardens House in Kuwait



AGi architects

Work
Three Gardens House
Client
Private
Location
Al Funaitees, Kuwait
Project Year
2016
Architecture and Design
AGi architects
Architect
AGi architects
Project Team (Design Team /Interior Design etc)
Main Architects: Nasser B. Abulhasan,
Joaquín Pérez-Goicoechea
Project Leaders: Stefania Rendinelli, Sara Barranco
Project Team: Willy Ollero, Gwenola Kergall, Lulu Alawadhi,
Ana López Cerrato, Alfredo Carrato, Cristina Ruiz Nolasco,
Hanan Alkoush, Samer Mohammad,
Babu Abraham Abdulhafiz Bahi El Din
Size and total area
1.300 m²
Additional Functions
Interior Design: AGi architects
Lighting: Irene Bas
Furniture supplier: Gunni & Trentino
Image credits
Fernando Guerra – FG+SG
Courtesy of AGi architects

Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate's district Fnaitees, in Kuwait, has recently been promoted as a tourist destination, offering great outdoors experiences and numerous holiday homes attracting people from all over the Gulf and beyond. This mainly residential district is divided into several Blocks classified by a number system: in Block 9 lies the Three Gardens House, on the East side of Highway No. 30. This dwelling is located about two hundred meters from the ocean and a small craft marina, designed by the Spanish international architecture firm AGi architects. The Spanish and Kuwaiti-based studio, established in 2006 by Joaquin Perez-Goicoechea and Nasser B. Abulhasan, provides services in Architecture, Planning, Urban and Interior Design, Research and Consulting, achieving an integration of skills supported by over 30 professionals and specialists in different sectors.





Three Gardens House design started with a question, as the studio was asked to design an outside space to be used 365 days a year. This request would have set no difficulties in a moderate climate such as Spain's, but considering Kuwait's extreme weather, the research for a new housing concept became inevitably much more challenging: in this area, in fact, the average high-low temperatures range from 39°C to 45°C in summer and 7°C to 13°C in winter.

A solution to the client's request was found in the diversification of the outdoors according to seasonal and daytime-frame usage variations: «Could you live in an outer space located at different levels? Could you classify your outdoor activities in evening and daytime actions, summer and winter events?» queried the designers. The answers to these questions would have become key to the house design as Kuwaiti inhabitants are perfectly aware of the dos and don'ts of their weather conditions.

The result is an introverted house concealed behind a light-colored stone cladding, also typical of the Spanish building tradition where the use of inner patios was – no coincidence – strongly influenced by Arabs. This dwelling features three gardens only at times revealed on the outside by clear-cut windows or by a permeable metal mesh strip in anodized aluminum. This twists around the volumes composing the architecture and brings them to unity. The house is developed as an intricate tangle of internal and external routes fluidly flowing around the gardens and diversifying on the basis of its users acting as filters for the guests, thus pursuing the clients' concept of family. Intimate rooms overlook the outside, while common areas are visually connected throughout the inner courtyard. At any time of the year, the family may rejoice in benefiting from the best garden of the three, depending on the outside climate.

Each garden was in fact designed in response to specific temperature necessities, so no coincidence that they have also been named after them: there is the Wet, the Summer and the Winter Garden. The former is located on the ground floor, in the house's daytime core. Its wide pool is fully visible from the dining room where sliding glass walls dematerialize spatial boundaries blending outdoor and indoor living spaces.

The Summer Garden is located right in the center of the house, 4 meters below the street level, in its coldest layer. Its position has been determined to guarantee a high-grade passive cooling: direct heating is prevented by the surrounding soil's thermal mass whereas direct sunlight irradiation is impeded by the higher volumes of the house facing the courtyard which project shades on the area. The pool also has been designed accordingly, in order to catalyze evapotranspiration: through convection processes water vapor rises and refreshes the upper levels. Vegetation has been installed for the same purpose too, in fact several plants either lay in a large flowerbed or pierce the stone cladding, thus connecting with a gentle slope the different heights of the space while controlling rain water down flow.

Finally, the Winter Garden has been placed on the roof: in wintertime the Sun's rays heat up the garden >



and in summer nights a sea breeze cools down temperatures. The terrace is covered with a rhomboid patterned skin in which a perforated membrane of anodized aluminum alternates with voids. The former obstructs direct solar radiation while lending to a sense of privacy, as the latter allows winds to penetrate the space.

Even though each garden was designed for a different use according to the time of the year, all of them actually merge into a unique outer space; a visual connection is maintained throughout the whole spatial development of the house whereas external stairs keep the levels physically linked. Moreover, white ceramic tiles covering all the inner surfaces of the courtyard lend a perception of continuity to these apparently distinguished outdoor areas and increase the natural lighting of the innermost rooms. Altogether the gardens constitute the house's real inner core.

No surprise Three Gardens House boasts a number of awards, such as the MEED Quality Awards 2017, in which it was both National and Regional winner in the "Residential Project of the Year" category, or as the latest Identity Design Award in the "Residential Interior" category. Besides, this project is shortlisted for WAF Awards 2017 in the "House Completed Buildings" category, whose winners will be announced in mid-November.

AGi architects definitely introduced a new housing concept in Kuwait offering the possibility to use outdoor spaces all year long, without renouncing modern design, but instead enriching it. In Three Gardens House spaces which are generally kept on the outside, such as gardens, are transposed to the inside instead, whereas the inner spaces are predominantly projected to the outside, being defined by evanescent walls: in other words, inside out, outside in.

Damiana Treccozzi

